DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 399 CE 028 191

AUTHOR Mertens, Donna M.
TITLE Policy Study of Vocational and Adult Education in Rural Areas.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 21p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 1981). For a related document see CE 028 129.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Problems: *Adult Education: *Community Attitudes: *Educational Assessment: Educational Needs: Employment Problems: Financial Problems: National Surveys: Policy Formation: *Rural Areas: Rural Education: Rural Environment: Rural Schools: *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

This study of the vocational and adult education system in isolated rural areas was designed to provide information that is necessary for the development of policy for vocational and adult education in isolated rural areas. The study consisted of a review of literature: unstructured interviews with representatives of the business, civic, and educational sectors of rural areas: a review of pertinent legislation: and an examination of exemplary programs. The perceptions of the people who have the responsibility for providing vocational and adult education in the twenty isolated rural areas form the basis of the results. An overwhelming consensus was found concerning the lack of jobs in these rural areas. Lack of funding tied with lack of jobs was the most frequently mentioned problem. Most of the schools and public services agencies cover large service areas, meaning their clients must travel long distances on poor or nonexistent roads, with no public transportation available. A wide range of problems were categorized as administrative programming, including limited populations, unavailability of qualified teachers, lack of guidance services, administrative burdens, and lack of services for adults. (A list of policy implications resulting from the study is appended.) (LRA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

POLICY STUDY OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

Donna M. Mertens[1]
Ohio State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Donna M. Mertens

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED198399

CE028191

"The federal government has not been very successful in rural areas. They put the money where the students are. They don't want to put money where there aren't very many people. Rural areas are kind of like the poor lost relative--we're ignored."
--Rural Educator, 1980

Residents of rural areas experience many economic and social problems which impact on the quality of their lives. For example, the average family income in nonmetropolitan areas is 15 percent below that of metropolitan families and the incidence of poverty is 50 percent higher than in urban areas. Of the 2,000 U.S. school districts where median income is less than $7,000 annually, 75 percent are rural (National Center for Education Statistics, 1972).

Rosenfeld (1979) suggested that vocational education has a role to play in helping rural areas overcome their social and economic problems. However, the small populations with low densities found in rural areas often mean that rural schools have difficulty in providing a range of vocational programs for students (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1977).

The primary response to the problems of serving a widely scattered rural population involved the consolidation of schools. Sher and Rosenfeld (1977) pointed out that the benefits of consolidation were illusory and often resulted in rural children traveling long distances to attend consolidated schools that were no better than the community schools they replaced. Lu and Tweeten (1973) found that busing students long distances had an adverse impact on achievement even when IQ and socioeconomic status were controlled.

Even with consolidation of services, many problems continue to plague rural educators. For example, Garza (1979) reported that migratory workers and their children were the most educationally deprived group in the nation. And

Paper presented at the 1981 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, California.

Clarenbach (1977) concluded that vocational programs for rural women were "notably traditional and in need of change" if rural women were to escape the "pathetically limited" range of occupations open to them. Fratoe (1980) reported that nonmetro blacks lag behind whites and metro blacks on every educational characteristic and outcome variable.

Educators and policy makers concerned with helping the disadvantaged in rural areas need information about their unique problems. In response to this concern and to a request from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education undertook a study of the vocational and adult education system in isolated rural areas. The study was designed to provide information that is necessary for the development of policy for vocational and adult education in isolated rural areas.

Methodology

The study consisted of a review of literature, unstructured interviews with representatives of the business, civic, and educational sectors of rural areas, a review of pertinent legislation and an examination of exemplary programs. The literature review was based on a search of computerized data bases such as the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Current Indexes to Journals in Education (CIJE), Comprehensive Dissertation Abstracts, National Technical Information System (NTIS), and the Smithsonian Science Information Exchange (SSIE). In addition, references were solicited from experts in the field of rural education.

In order to select a representative sample of rural areas for investigation, a sampling frame was established which included all counties (or county equivalents) with a population less than 10,000 that were not adjacent to a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). The county was chosen as the logical unit of analysis for rural areas because the county is the basic administrative unit on which data (such as census data) are collected.

To provide for a sample that would indeed reflect very sparsely populated and remote counties that would be geographically representative of the nation, the counties were grouped into categories within the ten federal regions that make up the United States. The first category listed counties with a population of 2,500 or less and the second contained all remaining counties under 10,000 in population.

One county per category was to be selected from each federal region for a total of twenty counties. This strategy was used to insure that very small counties were not left out of the sample. In most instances there were multiple listings for each category within the regions. Selection in these instances was based on 1970 census socioeconomic and unemployment data. Although 1970 data is out-dated, it was the only comprehensive computerized source of information for the universe of rural counties. In one case, Federal Region II, there was a single rural county. Therefore, a third county equivalent evidencing relatively high unemployment and low economic indicators was selected from Region I. In Region X, census areas were changed between the 1970 and the 1980 census. Therefore, an area was chosen based on the 1980 census divisions that corresponded as closely as possible to the site selected using the 1970 statistics.

An adaptation of case study methodology (Spirer, 1980) was used to gather information from the sample counties or county equivalents. A coding system was developed for indexing the information gathered. In brief, the system consisted of a site description segment and a problem/need segment. After a pilot test of the instrument, the interviews were begun.

Usually from two to six persons from the business, civic, and educational sectors were interviewed by telephone from each county, resulting in approximately fifteen contacts per community or about 300 calls for the twenty counties. Calls were commonly placed to the mayor's office or county clerk, the chamber of commerce, local employers, bankers, economic development offices, school superintendent's offices, state directors of vocational and adult education, advisory board members, school principals, teachers, counselors, local CETA and ABE representatives, and representatives of postsecondary institutions. The telephone conversations were designed to ask directly for opinions about existing needs or problems and recommendations for dealing with the problems.

The legislative review examined statutes pertinent to vocational and adult education. The major pieces of legislation included the most current Vocational Education Act and Amendments, the Adult Education Act, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, and the Economic Opportunity Act. Descriptors used to screen this legislation included rural, unemployment, dropout rate, economic development, economically disadvantaged, women, minorities, handicapped, and completion and placement.

A number of on-going programs were examined for evidence of exemplary attributes which could be used in modeling other programs. Of particular note were programmatic efforts in client outreach, equity issues, placement, accessibility and employer involvement. A variety of means were used to identify the selected programs including consultation with the National Center for Research in Vocational Education staff and external professional experts, and references encountered in the literature review.

Results

The perceptions of the people who have the responsibility for providing vocational and adult education in twenty isolated rural areas form the basis of the results. Their words and those of other state and local leaders are supplemented by information obtained from written documents. The sites are described in terms of their demographic characteristics, and an overview of the vocational and adult education services in the counties is provided. This is followed by a description of the problems and needs expressed by the community leaders in these isolated rural areas. Summaries of pertinent legislation and exemplary programs in rural areas are also provided.

Site Demographics

Demographic data were initially obtained from the 1970 census. Where possible, this information was updated by using the County-City Data Book 1977 and information available from county residents. Comprehensive data were available only for 1970, consequently these were used as a base for site selection. Sites with a population under 10,000 in 1970 were selected; by 1980, one of the sites had a population over 10,000. Unfortunately, 1980 census data was not available for all of the sites.

The sites ranged in size from 1,900 to 10,418, with a corresponding density between one and twenty-five persons per square mile. Fourteen of the twenty sites are predominately white, three are predominately black, one is predominately Mexican American, one is predominately Native Alaskan, and one has a large Native American population. The per capita income of the areas range from $1,716 to $4,566 (in 1974 dollars). The percentage of the population below the poverty level ranged from 8.3 percent to 59.0 percent. Overall unemployment for the sites ranged from 2.52 percent to 15.45 percent, while youth unemployment ranged from 31 percent to 77 percent.

Overview of Vocational and Adult Education

At the secondary level, many area vocational centers have been established in the center of the county or in adjacent counties. The three counties with comprehensive central high schools bus students between twenty minutes and two hours one-way from the farthest point. The four counties that send their vocational students to an adjoining county bus their students between thirty minutes and an hour one-way. Four sites have a choice of sending their students farther away (up to four hours one-way), and they have opted to forego vocational education for their students. Two of the counties have no high school within their boundaries, so they send their students to high schools in adjoining counties. Five of the counties have opted to have several small high schools with limited or no vocational education in order to maintain local control. Two of the counties have only one high school with limited or no vocational education. At present, students come from forty to fifty miles away to these schools, and no busing is provided at one school. Parents either drive their children everyday, or the children board in town.

Sixteen of the twenty sites do not have a postsecondary institution in the county. At one site, a community college in an adjoining county would bring a course to the site if eight to ten people enrolled. Another community tries to extend its services by the use of correspondence courses, hiring part-time local faculty and use of faculty travel. Most of the counties have postsecondary education within a 100 mile radius, although few of the schools have residential facilities. The community colleges have large service areas and usually have a wide array of vocational offerings.

About half of the sites have adult basic education (ABE) and GED services available to them in their county. While adult vocational education typically has a different meaning than ABE or GED, only one site reported offering any other courses for adults unless it was part of a CETA program. The ABE and GED programs were usually coordinated through the local high school or community college. Two sites offered individualized tutoring, and one site used a mobile van to bring services to the "real rural areas".

Problems and Needs in Vocational and Adult Education

The representatives mentioned a number of problem areas. Chief among these were employment, funding, community attitudes, equipment and facilities, transportation, administration, accessibility and legislation. A brief summary of their comments is presented below.

Employment. An overwhelming consensus was found concerning the lack of jobs in these rural areas. This was consistently identified as a key issue by representatives of education, business, and civic organizations. Representative comments include: "The problem is direct employment opportunities. Students want to stay in the area, but they must out-migrate to find jobs." "You can have vocational education, but you must have business to employ." "Not one student who graduated last year still lives here." "The community needs to counteract environmental restrictions so that industry can come in." "The setting is too remote to encourage industry to come in."

Over and over again, representatives said there are no jobs and the youth must out-migrate for employment. What jobs there are available are for unskilled labor and are largely seasonal. Several representatives thought encouragement of small business would provide some relief.

Funding. Lack of funding tied with lack of jobs was the most frequently mentioned problem. A low tax base and government "red tape" lead to inadequate resources to support education. Representative comments include: "The federal government has not been very successful in rural areas. They put the money where the students are. They don't want to put money where there aren't very many people. Rural areas are kind of like the poor lost relative--we're ignored." "With the tax base we can't come close to offering what other schools offer." "We are rather independent. We need funds, but we would want to outline our own program. Increase funds without all those restrictions." "The federal government must furnish funds for rural schools or small school districts are finished. The method of fundings must be changed. Property taxes are not adequate. Rural setasides may be a good idea. We have become so discouraged--it isn't worth it. The paperwork and the secretary required to get it out--we just don't have the time or the help." "The federal government should change the formula basis in states so that the rural areas can get a larger share. Population as a basis is unfair because unit costs are higher in rural areas. Transportation costs are also higher."

Community attitudes. Community attitudes were seen as a problem in a number of sites. Representative comments include: "Vocational education is not a priority because we have no jobs, and the people do not want to train for out-migration." "In 1965 the schools merged into a county-wide system; this was much resented by the tax payers. Since then, all bills asking for money for schools have been defeated." "Transportation is not a problem, getting kids exposed to vocational education is a problem. Depending on

what high school they went to, they may not know about vocational education or the occupations for which vocational education can train them." "The problem is kids not wanting to leave home or spend time on the road." "I have trouble getting kids to go to the regional high school because they are so peer-oriented--they don't want to leave their friends." "This county does not offer any vocational programs. They have tried for a tax referendum but the people reject it every year."

Equipment and Facilities. The inadequacy of equipment or facilities was mentioned sporadically as a problem. Many of the communities were served by regional high schools that were recently built. Those areas that complained of inadequate facilities or equipment were generally those with a local high school which was built in the early 1900's. Several representatives of older institutions said they had inadequate funds to renovate their buildings to make them accessible for the handicapped. Several area representatives complained of a lack of availability of postsecondary institutions.

Transportation. Transporation was another consistently mentioned problem by respondents. Most of the schools and public service agencies cover large service areas, meaning their clients must travel long distances on poor or nonexistent roads, with no public transportation available. Transportation costs are also on the increase, creating another drain on educational resources. Consolidation has resulted in higher transporation costs and, in some instances, a complete unavailability of vocational education because it is too far away. One representative described the problem as follows: "Transportation is prohibitive in attending the area vocational center forty-six miles away. If the students attend, they would not have time for basic/academic education." The lack of public transportation was cited as an impediment to conducting work-study programs, to getting to any jobs at all, and to CETA and ABE clients' participation in their programs.

Administrative programming. A wide range of problems were categorized as administrative programming including limited populations, unavailability of qualified teachers, lack of guidance services, administrative burdens, and lack of services for adults.

The size of the community and the concomitant small school enrollment mean limited course offerings, as exemplified by these comments: "Limited population base makes it impossible to expand into program areas the community would like to have." "In this size community and with this budget, a formal vocational program that meets all the state

requirements is difficult." "We really have a problem because of cost in offering program variety."

While the educational representatives felt their staffs were well qualified, they did feel that recruiting, retention and training of staff required a substantial investment of resources, as is exemplified by these comments: "Attracting competent vocational instructors is a problem. We can't compete with business and industry salary-wise." "Teacher turnover is a problem. If we can't replace them, we don't offer the program." "It is difficult for teachers to get further training due to having to travel so far."

Counseling and guidance services are quite limited, especially in the areas of career awareness and counseling. Representative comments include: "The weakest area is counseling. The teachers function in that role now, and there is no career education." "There are no counselors at our school. Sometimes one comes from another county, but it's not part of his job. The reason is it's rural, remote and few dollars--so no guidance."

Administrative burdens in trying to obtain and administer federal funds were described as follows: "Rural areas cannot compete with urban areas for special monies--haven't got the staff to write the proposals." "The major problem is we don't know how to write proposals for money. We need training for people to learn how to do this." "We need methods to find out what's available." "Mandates and paperwork are cumbersome. Paperwork overburdens our $9,000 to $10,000 vocational education budget."

Accessibility. Accessibility for special needs students and for students in nontraditional programs represents another category of problems faced by rural educators, as the following comments indicate: "Serving the handicapped is a problem. The state did emphasize separate programs, then changed and students were mainstreamed. Teachers have no training for handling the handicapped and disadvantaged." "Economics of the programs are a problem. We have the same problems as urban areas only magnified. A family moved here with two hearing-impaired kids. The school had to hire a full-time teacher. The state and federal governments help on a per pupil basis only." "We don't have any handicapped because the campus cannot accomodate them. It is set on the side of a hill. It would take a massive amount of money to correct the situation." "Hearing-impaired is a problem for ABE students. There are a lot of hearing impaired persons and no special services. We just talk loud." "A sheltered workshop is badly needed for CETA clients." "We have no special programs; we mainstream all we can. Instructional

aides do work with the handicapped in some programs, but I would hardly call them vocational." "The second language is the number one problem. The federal government is giving support for bilingual education, but curriculum materials for vocational education need to be locally developed."

"There is a lack of good vocational education programs for women. You can find some women in vocational education programs, but women do not get placed in nontraditional jobs." "Accessibility is a problem for ABE clients. Most of the people are poor and have cars that don't work well--then distance and geography become factors." "The poor people can't afford to enroll in CETA because they can't afford to leave the work they do. The low prevailing wages get them into a bondage thing, into a set work cycle, so they can't take advantage of a work program."

Legislation. The major comments on the legislation that governs vocational and adult education centered on the excessive paperwork and restrictions. Many of the respondents felt that the legislation was written for urban areas. "Federal guidelines are written for urban areas. We may only have one student who falls into a low incidence category. We don't receive funds because we don't have the numbers." "Legislation is written by urban people. There's no flexibility from federal to state, which hampers the local level. There's overlap in handicapped, vocational education, and disadvantaged legislation with conflicting accountability requirements." "Too much control at the federal level. Too many mandates." "Too much money is spent before it reaches the student."

Legislative Review

The 1976 Vocational Education Amendments (P.L. 94-482) include numerous provisions related to unemploymemt, economically disadvantaged, handicapped, minorities, women, dropout, and completion and placement. However, the term "rural" is used only three times. Section 124 says that states should give priority to isolated rural areas having a substantial number of youth who have dropped out of school or who are unemployed. This refers to the use of funds under Section 120 for the construction, equipment, and operation of residential schools to provide vocational education.

In Section 132, the use of funds is authorized for exemplary and innovative programs to develop training opportunities for persons in sparsely populated rural areas and for individuals migrating from farms to urban areas. Ten such exemplary programs started in 1977 were supported in 1979.

The third time rural was mentioned was in Section 191 which provided for emergency assistance to LEAs in rural and urban areas to modernize, remodel or renovate facilities to provide vocational education.

The Adult Education Act (P.L. 95-561) requires representation of residents of rural areas in the development and implementation of the state plan. No other provisions focus directly on rural areas, although special emphasis is given to services for the elderly, bilingual persons, Indians, and Indochina refugees.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (P.L. 95-524) is "to provide job training and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged, unemployed, or underemployed persons..." Consequently, the Act is replete with references to these groups. The term "rural" is also used in a variety of contexts. For example, Section 311 authorizes demonstration and experimental projects to be conducted "in rural and urban areas, in sparsely and densely populated areas, and in areas with inadequate means of transportation." And Section 312 authorizes a labor market and job bank information system "to establish and maintain more comprehensive household budget data at different levels of living, including a level of adequacy, to reflect the differences of household living cost in regions and localities, both urban and rural."

The Economic Opportunity Act (P.L. 88-452) is also replete with references to economic development in rural areas. For example the purpose of Subchapter VII (Sections 2981-2985) is "to encourage the development of special programs by which the residents of urban and rural low-income areas may, through self-help and mobilization of the community at large, with appropriate Federal assistance, improve the quality of their economic and social participation in community life in such a way as to contribute to the elimination of poverty and the establishment of permanent economic and social benefits (Section 2981)."

Exemplary Programs

Programs were located which addressed the major problem areas that were identified in the study. A number of diverse, on-going programs were reviewed. The exemplary nature of these programs is attributable to the nature of the population being served and the manner of program delivery. These programs offer feasible alternatives in dealing with identified problem or need areas in adult and vocational education.

Rather than list specific programs, the unique features of the identified programs are discussed in terms of their appropriateness for fulfilling specific need areas (see Appendix 1 for a list of contact persons for exemplary programs). For example, accessiblility to programs in rural areas is a problem due to long distances and travel times. Various innovative ways of dealing with this problem have been tried successfully. Mobile vans have been used to bring vocational education to students who would otherwise be unserved. Telecommunications have been used to deliver computer-assisted and television-based instruction to students, teachers, and other education personnel.

Sex-role stereotyping persists in vocational and adult education in rural areas. Model programs have been developed to prepare disadvantaged women for entry-level jobs as electricians, carpenters and auto mechanics. Such a program requires support from business, industry and unions, as well as the provision of supplementary services such as day-care.

Teacher training, recruitment and retention is a problem in rural areas. The development of a comprehensive computerized data bank has assisted in solving problems for special education in rural areas. Such an approach has potential for vocational education in rural areas.

Linkages represent a problem in rural areas. Collaborative councils have been established for the purposes of developing a trained work-force, and attracting industry or otherwise creating jobs. These programs offer feasible alternatives in dealing with identified problem or need areas in adult and vocational education.

Job creation has been approached by a variety of methods. Contracted vocational education involves a contract between an employer and the school in which the employer agrees to teach one or two students specific skills. School-based community development offers another strategy. The school plays a leadership role in establishing a needed business in the community. The business provides an opportunity to teach entrepreneurial skills to the students in a realistic environment.

Summary and Recommendations

A review of literature, legislation, and exemplary programs, and interviews with community leaders resulted in the identification of problems facing vocational and adult education in isolated rural areas. The identification of problems resulted in the formulation of the following priority areas which require attention:

1. Economic development is necessary because of the lack of jobs available in rural areas. Economic development in rural areas involves job creation by bringing industry into a community or by developing the entrepreneurial skills of residents so that they can start their own business. The implications for training include a greater flexibility in skill development, i.e. training in job cluster areas rather than overly narrow, job-specific training. In addition, a trained labor force is necessary to attract and supply new industry. Therefore, rural people must have access to training, or new industries will continue to bring in their own, better-trained personnel.

2. Accessibility is a key priority area that includes transportation to existing services as well as development of alternative delivery systems. The alternative delivery systems include such options as use of mobile units, telecommunications, and individualized contracted vocational services that utilize community resources for training. Limited course offerings could be overcome by these means.

3. Up-to-date training is related to being responsive to current labor market demands. This includes not only the type of training, but also the facilities and equipment required for up-to-date training.

4. Teacher training, recruitment and retention is a priority area. Services cannot be provided when a quality teaching staff is unavailable.

5. Linkages are a priority area in terms of provision of services for people of all ages and the creation of jobs. A community facilitator is necessary to provide the link between education and economic development.

6. Community attitudes can be affected by involvement of the residents in training and creation of jobs. The provision of postsecondary and adult education is a priority area. Rural communities have a residual older population who are in need of basic education, and they have a significant population of high school graduates that need postsecodnary training. Alternative methods of delivering such a service need to be explored.

7. Supplementary services, including counseling and guidance, career education, and special education are required. These might be provided on a regional basis or through some other innovative manner.

8. The needs of special populations are not being adequately met in rural areas. The handicapped, poor, minorities, women, and those whose primary language is not English continue to be underserved.

There are critical factors that the federal government should be sensitive to if it is to address these priority areas. First, the autonomy of the rural community must be preserved. Federal programs must allow for flexibility in the types of programs that are funded. Acquisition of funds and reporting use of funds must be simplified in light of the lack of personnel resources available in rural areas. Funds should be used to open up options for the individual and the school. Funding formulas should be changed; the use of population as a base is unfair to rural areas. Federal funds should be used to stimulate innovation and creativity so that a different model of education can emerge that is more suitable to rural areas.

Recognizing the priority areas, critical factors and uniqueness of rural areas, the following policy implications are presented:

1. The Congress should set aside funds for rural vocational and adult education that are to be distributed through the states to rural areas that develop local plans that address the priority areas (listed above). The funding formula should allow a minimal level of funding that is necessary to serve small populations with additional increments based on population.

2. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education should provide technical assistance to rural areas in the listed priority areas.

3. The U.S. Department of Education should sponsor research that is responsive to the listed priority areas.

4. The Congress should require the National Center for Education Statistics to publish data that further enables the identification of unique information about vocational and adult education in rural areas.

5. The Congress should establish an office of rural education as a linking agency with federal agencies such as the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce, Energy, Agriculture, and Transportation to coordinate information about rural areas.

6. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education should encourage state departments of education to re-evaluate their rural vocational and adult education programs, and to provide assistance to such areas.

By providing funding, technical assistance, and research opportunities in the priority areas, the federal government will allow rural communities the flexibility to develop alternative delivery systems that will meet their unique needs. Provision of information about rural areas is essential at the local, state, and national levels. Currently, the state of rural America is only known at a national level every ten years following the population census. Coordination of federal efforts and availability of statistical information are needed if quality education is to be provided to rural areas. Cooperation between federal and state agencies is necessary to insure that funds are used appropriately in rural communities.

The major thrust of the federal initiative should be to enable rural communities to develop programs that are responsive to their needs. Rural communities need to train entrepreneurs because a traditional job structure does not exist. The urban model of one certified teacher with thirty students studying the same subject is nonfunctional for rural areas. Programs such as the school-based community development corporation change the school from a consumer of resources to a producer of goods and services, while creating jobs and providing life-relevant training for the students. Another alternative, contracted vocational services, would enable a school system to provide vocational training when only one or two students desired a specific type of training. Use of mobile vans can bring programs to

students in remote areas. Telecommunications can be used to transfer information (rather than bodies) so that learning can occur at sites other than a centrally located school.

As Sher (1977) points out, the number of rural residents in America is not inconsequential. "Depending on the criteria for defining 'rural', the rural population ranges anywhere from the most stringently conservative estimate of 37.5 million people (18.5 percent of the total United States population) to 65.1 million people (32.0 percent of the total United States population), when the most liberal guidelines are used (p. 294)." When the U.S. Bureau of the Census definition is used, 54 million people (more than 25 percent of the total United States population) live in rural areas.

The federal government has a responsibility to this large constituency to offer them an alternative. Previously young people were given the option of leaving their community or facing unemployment and continuing in the poverty cycle. The course of action proposed in this study would open up the options of rural residents and result in an adequate system that is responsive to their unique needs.

References

Clarenbach, Kathryn F. Educational Needs of Rural Women, Report of the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, 1977.

Fratoe, Frank A. The Education of Nonmetro Blacks, Rural Development Research Report No. 21, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 1980.

Garza de la, Charles. Equity for Migrant Children in Rural Areas. Presented at: Rural Education Seminar. College Park, Maryland, 1979.

Lu, Yas-Chi and Tweeten, Luther. "The Impact of Busing on Student Achievement," Growth and Change, 4 (4): 44-46, 1973.

National Center for Education Statistics. Social and Economic Characteristics of U.S. School Districts. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1972.

Rosenfeld, Stuart A. Rural VOC's for Rural Folks: Vocational Education in the Country. Presented at: Rural Education Seminar. College Park, Maryland, 1979.

Sher, Jonathan (Ed.) Education in Rural America, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1977.

Sher, Jonathan P. and Rosenfeld, Stuart A. Public Education in Sparsely Populated Areas of the United States, A Country Paper Prepared for the Center for Educational Research and Innovation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, France, 1977.

Spirer, Janet. The Case Study Method, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio, 1980.

APPENDIX 1

CONTACTS FOR EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

I. Secondary Occupational Training Program

Keith Erickson, Director
Northwest Area Schools Multi-District
310 11th St. W. Box 7-B
Lemmon, S.D. 57638

II. Consolidated Youth Employment Program

Kay Lovell
Central Texas Manpower Consortium
P.O. Box 727, 319 E. Wallace
San Saba, Texas 76877

III. Educational Telecommunications for Alaska

Dr. William J. Bramble
Project ETA
Alaska Department of Education
Pouch F
Juneau, Alaska 99811

IV. Appalachian Community Service Network

Dr. Harold Morse
ACSN
Suite 240
1200 New Hampshire, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

V. National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project

Dr. Doris Helge
Center for Innovation and Development
College of Human Development and Learning
Murray State University
Murray, Kentucky 42071

VI. Rural Work-Education Councils

Dr. Karl A. Gudenberg
The National Institute for Work and Learning
Center for Education and Work
Suite 301, 1211 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

VII. Economic Development in Staples, Minnesota

Duane R. Lund, Superintendent of Schools
Staples, Minnesota

This "success story" is documented in "The Role of Vocational Education in the Economic Development of Rural Areas: Implications for Research and Development," Occasional Paper No. 62, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210, August 1980.

VIII. Wider Opportunities for Women

Susan Gilbert
1649 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

IX. Contracted Vocational Services

Daryl Hobbes
Director of Rural Development
620 Clark Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri 65201

X. School-based Community Development

Robert Bell
Arkansas Community Development Education Association
1518 Club Road, Suite 105
Little Rock, Arkansas 72207

XI. Program for Acquiring Competence in Entrepreneurship

Publications Office
The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

XII. Rural America Series

Publications Office
The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Footnote

[1]This paper is based on the following report:

Mertens, Donna M.; Chafetz, S., and Nunez, A. Rural policy for vocational and adult education. Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1980.